

**Testimony to the 2009 Montana Legislature
Joint Education Subcommittee**

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By
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Mr. Chair, members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Alan English. I am the Manager of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District in Gallatin County. I am here today to encourage you to fully support and fund the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (Bureau). The Bureau has a long and respected history of providing valuable geology and water resource information to Montanans since 1919.

The products and services of the Bureau are used on a daily basis by the general public, private companies, and government agencies. Government agencies that routinely use information collected by the Bureau include Counties, DNRC, DEQ, MDOT, and MDOA.

The Bureau is responsible for the development and publication of a wealth of geologic and hydrologic information that aids others. As manager of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District, I rely heavily on the water resource information provided by the Bureau's Ground Water Assessment Program.

The Ground Water Assessment Program includes the Ground Water Information Center (GWIC), the State-Wide Ground Water Monitoring Program, and the Ground-Water Characterization Program. In my opinion, the Ground Water Information Center (GWIC) database is one of the best statewide ground water information databases in the Country.

Other important programs of the Bureau include the State Map-Geologic Mapping Program, the Minerals Information and Small Miners Assistance Program, the Earthquake Studies Program, and the Butte Mine Flooding Monitoring Program.

The Bureau is unique among State agencies in that they are non-regulatory and provide non-biased, scientifically sound information for all Montanans to use. The information they provide is often critical in helping interested parties in understanding and dealing with controversial issues such as water use, mining, coal bed methane development, drought and climate change, and population growth. Most importantly the information collected by the Bureau is readily available to the public.

In closing, I urge you to consider that for every dollar spent to support the Bureau, Montana taxpayers ultimately save many more by avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts between local and State agencies, and others. I sincerely believe the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology is one of the most productive and beneficial agencies in State Government. I urge you to support them in every way possible. I would be happy to answer any questions you have related to my experiences with the Bureau at this time, or in the future via the contact information provided with this testimony.